

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-11, 15-21 and 24-27 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 4, 11, 15 and 18 are amended, and claims 2-3 and 12-14 are canceled with this response. Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 20-27, and the provisional allowance of claims 3-8, 14, 18 and 19. Claim 18 has been amended into independent format, along with its respective intervening claims. Allowance of claim 18, along with depending claim 19 is therefore respectfully requested. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested based on the following remarks:

I. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1 AND 11 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,904,290 (Palenius). Claims 1 and 11 have been amended to include the limitations of claims 3 and 14, respectively, along with their respective intervening claims. Since claims 3 and 14 were held to contain allowable subject matter, claims 1 and 11 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

II. CONCLUSION

For at least the above reasons, the claims currently under consideration are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Should any fees be due as a result of the filing of this response, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the Deposit Account Number 50-1733, MAIKP172US.

Respectfully submitted,
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